

Gore Vidal
<p>Sometime in the late 1950s, that world-class gossip and occasional historian, John F. Kennedy, told me how, in 1948, Harry S. Truman had been pretty much abandoned by everyone when he came to run for president. Then an American Zionist brought him two million dollars in cash, in a suitcase, aboard his whistle-stop campaign train. 'That's why our recognition of Israel was rushed through so fast.' As neither Jack nor I was an antisemite (unlike his father and my grandfather) we took this to be just another funny story about Truman and the serene corruption of American politics.</p>
<p>Unfortunately, the hurried recognition of Israel as a state has resulted in fortyfive years of murderous confusion, and the destruction of what Zionist fellow travellers thought would be a pluralistic state - home to its native population of Muslims, Christians and Jews, as well as a future home to peaceful European and American Jewish immigrants, even the ones who affected to believe that the great realtor in the sky had given them, in perpetuity, the lands of Judea and Sameria. Since many of the immigrants were good socialists in Europe, we assumed that they would not allow the new state to become a theocracy, and that the native Palestinians could live with them as equals. This was not meant to be. I shall not rehearse the wars and alarms of that unhappy region. But I will say that the hasty invention of Israel has poisoned the political and intellectual life of the USA, Israel's unlikely patron.</p>
<p>Unlikely, because no other minority in American history has ever hijacked so much money from the American taxpayers in order to invest in a 'homeland'. It is as if the American taxpayer had been obliged to support the Pope in his reconquest of the Papal States simply because one third of our people are Roman Catholic. Had this been attempted, there would have been a great uproar and Congress would have said no. But a religious minority of less than two per cent has bought or intimidated seventy senators (the necessary two thirds to overcome an unlikely presidential veto) while enjoying support of the media.</p>
<p>In a sense, I rather admire the way that the Israel lobby has gone about its business of seeing that billions of dollars, year after year, go to make Israel a 'bulwark against communism'. Actually, neither the USSR nor communism was ever much of a presence in the region. What America did manage to do was to turn the once friendly Arab world against us. Meanwhile, the misinformation about what is going on in the Middle East has got even greater and the principal victim of these gaudy lies - the American taxpayer to one side - is American Jewry, as it is constantly bullied by such professional terrorists as Begin and Shamir. Worse, with a few honorable exceptions, Jewish-American intellectuals abandoned liberalism for a series of demented alliances with the Christian (antisemitic) right and with the Pentagon-industrial complex. In 1985 one of them blithely wrote that when Jews arrived on the American scene they 'found liberal opinion and liberal politicians more congenial in their attitudes, more sensitive to Jewish concerns' but now it is in the Jewish interest to ally with the Protestant fundamentalists because, after all, "is there any point in Jews hanging on dogmatically, hypocritically, to their opinions of yesteryear?"</p>
<p>At this point the American left split and those of us who criticised our onetime Jewish allies for misguided opportunism, were promptly rewarded with the ritual epithet 'antisemite' or 'self-hating Jew'.</p>
<p>Fortunately, the voice of reason is alive and well, and in Israel, of all places. From Jerusalem, Israel Shahak never ceases to analyse not only the dismal politics of Israel today but the Talmud itself, and the effect of the entire rabbinical tradition on a small state that the right-wing rabbinate means to turn into a theocracy for Jews only. I have been reading Shahak for years. He has a satirist's eye for the confusions to be found in any religion that tries to rationalise the irrational. He has a scholar's sharp eye for textual contradictions. He is a joy to read on the great Gentile-hating Dr Maimonides.</p>
<p>Needless to say, Israel's authorities deplore Shahak. But there is not much to be done with a retired professor of chemistry who was born in Warsaw in 1933 and spent his childhood in the concentration camp at Belsen. In 1945, he came to Israel; served in the Israeli military; did not become a Marxist in the years when it was fashionable. He was - and still is - a humanist who detests imperialism whether in the names of the God of Abraham or of George Bush. Equally, he opposes with great wit and learning the totalitarian strain in Judaism. Like a highly learned Thomas Paine, Shahank illustrates the prospect before us, as well as the long history behind us, and thus he continues to reason, year after year. Those who heed him will certainly be wiser and - dare I say? - better. He is the latest, if not the last, of the great prophets.</p>
<p>https://bit.LY/Israel-Shahak-Jewish-History-Jewish-Religion</p>